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## BLOWING PAST.

It might almost be supposed from the conduct of mankind, that experience of the evanescence of worldly things had been lost on them. They do not keep in mind sufficiently how things blow past. There is at all times felt among large sections of the race the impression of some great event, or series of events, happening, or about to happen, by which they believe their destinies are to be eternally affected, or from which they apprehend the most serious and immediate dangers, but which, at the end of six months, are no more heard of, the simple fact being, that the whole thing has blown past. I do not know how many wars we have been about to have with one state or another, chiefly with America and France, within the last ten years, not one of which has taken place. There was the Maelcod war (probably the very name is already forgotten), and the Boundary war, and the Prince de Joinville war, and the war about the Spanish marriages, all of which made a most alarming appearance in the newspapers, particularly those which occurred during the prorogations of parliament, and were, for their time, things that affected the spirits of men and the prices of stocks, but yet passed away into the region of forgetfulness without one particle of gunpowder being exploded on either side. People appear to be under a similar delusion regarding the importance of the time at the moment passing over their head. Almost every year that I can recollect has been regarded as constituting the most important era that ever was known, no one ever remembering that what is thought of the present was thought of the last, or reflecting that the same thing will be thought of the next, whatever may be the comparative character of its events. One might acquire some general sense of these absurdities by a retrospective glance over the leading articles of any leading newspaper. He would there see how often we have been under the most intense pressure from events, and crises, and conjunctures of policy in matters foreign and domestic, for a fortnight or three weeks at a time, but no more. At one time an alarm about the want of defences for our island; at another the Irish rebellion; at another the Chartists. Nothing ever comes of it. It blows past.

It seems a pity that the public should be continually under an agitation of anxiety, or something worse, on account of such things. We are anxious to do what in us lies to place them above such temporary impressions. We shall take, for instance, the present European crisis, which every one says has been totally unprecedented. Well, it is a strange year for revolutions. But what of that? Thousands of events similar to those which are calling forth our wonder have happened before, though not so many about the same time; and what is

the result? They have all blown past. Each, in its week, or its month, or its six months, has gone into oblivion (the 'Annual Register'), leaving scarcely any indication of its having ever passed at all. That which has been will be again. All of these troubles will float away like so many bubbles down the stream of time, succeeded by similar bubbles, but passing into nothing themselves. Will it not, then, have been a distressing consideration that so much uneasiness has been felt, and so many losses incurred in stocks, without any just occasion? Think of this, my friends, and read of maternal revolutions in the 'Times' with patient and simply contemplative minds. Besides, I have some doubts about the very events about which all this pother is made. It is not sufficiently kept in mind that history is a muse which wears pockets, and must eat and drink. She scatters her priests over the earth, on the pretence that they may be present at the very making of the events, and send them hot and hot to her various temples in Fleet Street and the Strand. But, these gentlemen having so obvious an interest in the intensity of events, can anything be more likely than that they give them a certain depth of colouring which does not belong to them; perhaps here and there help out halting effects, or possibly (God forgive them!) make the whole story out of next to nothing? To be quite candid, I am sceptical respecting most of the alleged events of this wonderful year, for having lately passed through Europe almost from one side to the other, I found nothing changed or deranged, not one dish less at the table-d'hôtes, the same civility everywhere, no troubles or vexations beyond those usually arising from passports and custom-houses; and on conversing with a lady from Dublin about the state of things in that capital, I was assured there had not been so gay a season for a long time. I am not very sure that I was not in one Rhenish town at the very time when a revolution, or demonstration, or something of that kind, took place, and I knew nothing of it till a fortnight after, when I chanced to catch it up in a stray copy of 'Galignani.' Against the journals on such points I pitch the hotels. They never admit that anything extraordinary has happened in their neighbourhood, but laugh at all those newspaper stories as, at the best, frightful exaggerations. Not a landlord did I meet with over the continent who did not deplore the absurd terror of the English for the so-called events, by which they had been deprived of the enjoyment of one of the finest summers for travelling and for continental residence which had been known for a long time. Now the hotels are surely as likely to know what is passing before their eyes as the correspondents of the various newspapers; and when I find one of these establishments conducting itself with unaffected serenity during the whole time that the city in which it is placed is said to be in a paroxysm of poli-

tical agitation, or in the hands of a mob or a national guard, I must confess that I feel inclined to believe the hotel, and to doubt the historian. But let any one go to the continent and judge for himself, and I feel assured that he will see this five-thousandth *annus mirabilis* in a very different light from that of Fleet Street. Everywhere the common affairs of life appear to be going on as usual—people in their shops, people lounging in the streets and other public places, nursery-maids walking out with their infant charges, the cafés and theatres very brilliant and attractive as usual in the evenings, mass going on in the morning in the old cathedrals, ladies and gentlemen travelling in all the various ways, and all the ordinary husbandry of the season going on in the country. It is impossible, in such circumstances, to believe that any great change has taken place. There may be a few new colours in the national flag, or a few foolish men sitting somewhere under a belief that they are regenerating their country; but that is all, and even that must soon, if the laws of nature remain as they have been, blow past.

It is of course only too true that circumstances occur occasionally of no such transitory nature. There are things which we cannot and should not suffer to blow past; but what I allude to is the state of chronic exaggeration in which we habitually remain, and which at this moment, notwithstanding the late deplorable events, contrast almost in a ludicrous manner with the social repose of the people. This affords a lesson.

But is not this a lesson which might well be extended even to the simplest matters? We often feel ourselves in circumstances which appear as if they would overwhelm us. After all, they blow past. They have done so; they do so every day: when they next recur, let us remember that still they must blow past. And not only this, but we may see how useful a thing it is to learn to let them blow past. Let us take all worldly things easily; let us give them an easy passage into the nothingness towards which they all hasten. There—fret your little hour—appealing from the present to the next moment, I care not, for then you must have blown past!

#### THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

THE vast region forming the northerly part of North America, having Canada and the United States on the south, the south and the Arctic Ocean on the north, and extending laterally from the Atlantic to the Pacific, has long been in possession of the Hudson's Bay Company, an English association, having its headquarters in London. The history of a society of traders which exercises jurisdiction over a territory 2600 miles in length by 1460 in breadth cannot be uninteresting, and we propose to say a few words respecting its origin and character.

The capabilities of the shores of Hudson's Bay, a great sea comprised within the territory, for carrying on a trade in furs having been represented to Prince Rupert and others, shortly after the restoration of Charles II., they procured a royal charter of association in 1669, which conferred on them 'all the lands and territories in Hudson's Bay, together with all the trade thereof, and all others which they should acquire.' The first capital of the Company was only £10,500; but in 1690 they trebled this amount, having already formed establishments on Rupert's River, Moose River, the Albany, and the Severn. From this period till 1713 the new Company was engaged in almost constant war, the settlements changing hands again and again between them and the French; but when the peace of Utrecht left the English masters of this northern field, they set to work with great vigour to increase their

capital and extend their trade. In 1721 they caused several exploratory voyages to be performed; but these resulted only in the exploration of the western side of the Bay, and the discovery of the termination of the Coppermine and Mackenzie Rivers in the Arctic Ocean. The severity of the climate in this northern region may be judged of from the fact, that a glass containing brandy was frequently frozen to the tongue or lips of the drinker, and that the stream of cold vapour rushing into a room when the door was opened was converted into snow.

In the meantime the Company, in the pursuit of their trade, suffered some annoyance from private interlopers, known as the *couteurs du bois*, who followed their hunting adventures in all directions from the Canadian frontier. After the conquest of Canada from the French in 1759, the *couteurs du bois* were succeeded by a more formidable, because united body, composed chiefly of Scotch Highlanders, who, delighted with the sport-like business, at length threw their stocks together, and in 1783-4 formed the North-West Fur Company. Their central establishment was at Montreal; and their capital, amounting in a few years to £40,000, was increased threefold before the end of the century.

It may easily be supposed that the rivalry of the two companies was not of an ordinary kind, when their servants, the most daring and desperate adventurers in the world, met hand to hand in the primeval woods of America. There is but a step between such hunting as theirs and war, and the encounter of the rival fur-traders was frequently attended by bloodshed. Hunting and fighting by turns, drinking to madness among themselves, and joining anon in the dances of the yelling savages, our countrymen were looked up to by the wild men of the woods both with terror and admiration. Sometimes, when they were on the grounds of a tribe who had not yet been taught the abuse of spirits, the sober Indians gathered round in astonishment and perplexity to see the Canadians get drunk; but when the exhibition had acquired a character of frenzy, they fled in terror from the blazing eyes and gleaming knives of the rioters, who must have seemed to them to have lost all the characteristics of human beings. Still more lamentable is the picture of Indian intoxication. First friendship, then endearment, then misunderstanding, then strife, then murder; squaws stabbing their husbands, and husbands their squaws, in drunken madness; with the miserable children of both running from parent to parent, and rending the air with their screams. Such were the fruits of the first lessons in European civilisation.

The furious rivalry of the two companies demanded a corresponding outlay of money, and the North-West, being the weaker in this point, was at length obliged to yield. Though defeated, however, they could hardly be said to be subdued; for the principal partners obtained shares in the Hudson's Bay Company, the inferior officers were received into the united service, and the two warring factions became one great association. Montreal, the capital of the forest lords, sunk into comparative insignificance; but the territory at large was improved both in peace and business.

Since the union of the rival associations, the Hudson's Bay Company has enjoyed a complete monopoly; but although mere money-making is the prime object of the concern, it cannot be said that the Company has been unmindful of other matters. Lately, it has stopped the trade in spirits within its territories, much to the benefit of the poor Indians; and this humane act never would or could have taken place if free settlements had been permitted. Giving the Company credit for this and some other proceedings, it could be wished that the association adopted a more liberal policy as respects general trade and colonisation. Their territory consists of three separate regions: the prairie country, inhabited by hitherto untamable savages; the forest country, producing the only export, fur; and the west

country, lying between the Rocky Mountain range and the Pacific. Of these, the vast forest country may continue to be their game preserve, as it is good for little else; but the fertile valleys of the Pacific are fitted to become the residence of a great and civilised population, while their temperate climate renders the fur they produce of comparatively little value, and the intervention of the Rocky Mountains protects the forest region from the encroachments of their inhabitants.

The supreme management of the Company is vested in nine individuals: a governor, deputy-governor, and seven directors, whose seat is in London. A resident governor is appointed by this board, who, with the assistance of local councils, superintends the settlements in America. Under him are chief factors, each having charge of several posts, then principal and secondary traders, and then clerks. Promotion takes place according to merit; for in so stirring and adventurous a life, arbitrary patronage must be out of the question. The Company's servants are almost all Scotchmen, chiefly from the northern counties, and in general they are well-educated men. There must be a strange fascination in the life they lead, to induce such persons to submit to its dangers and privations. 'The chief officers, including the governor himself,' says the compiler of 'British America,' 'often endure hardships which, to those accustomed to the comforts of civilised life, must appear almost incredible. They frequently spend months without seeing the inside of a house, going to sleep at night in the most sheltered spot they can find, wrapped in their cloaks, and a blanket which has served during the day as a saddle. Unless fortunate in the chase, they have no means of obtaining food, and are sometimes obliged to kill their dogs and horses to relieve hunger. Yet these hardy Scotsmen will find a livelihood in districts so desolate, that even the natives sometimes perish for want. Parties of them have spent whole winters on the banks of rivers or lakes, where their only sustenance was the fish drawn from the waters, without bread, vegetables, or any other article; the roasting or boiling of the fish forming their only variety. Yet amid all these hardships, such is their zeal in the occupation, that a complaint scarcely ever escapes their lips.'

The servants of the Company who undergo such fatigues, and on whom a heavy responsibility is laid, as respects personal behaviour and the treatment of natives, are a respectable and intelligent body of individuals. They are generally animated by a strong love of adventure; but pursue the chase only for their own amusement, or for the supply of their tables. The Indians, more especially of the wooded country, are the actual hunters, and diligently employ themselves in hunting the furred animals, and selling their skins to the Company. When engaged in the traffic at the various forts, the natives live at free quarters, sometimes for three months at a time. Without assistance, in fact, they would starve, for they never think of laying up a store of food for themselves. A party have been known, after spearing a great number of deer, merely to cut out their tongues, and throw the carcasses into the river, although they were absolutely sure that in a very short time they would have to endure all the extremities of hunger. The Company's forts serve them likewise as hospitals; and in winter the diseased and infirm of a tribe are frequently left there while the others are engaged in hunting. Since the use of spirits has been abandoned, their numbers are increasing; and under the constant efforts of teachers and missionaries, they have made some progress in civilisation. The number is at present estimated at 150,000.

The prairie country is traversed by Indians of quite a different character. They are fierce and independent; and the agents of the Company are obliged to act as if they were in an enemy's territory; being always well armed, and choosing in general the night for their journeys, in order to have a better chance of avoiding a encounter. In the narrow country on the west of the

Rocky Mountains they are likewise of a fierce character, and carry on furious war with each other; but they have latterly begun to find it their interest to keep well with the Company, who have been able to reduce greatly their defensive forces. Sir George Simpson gives the following anecdote of prairie war:—'About twenty years ago, a large encampment of Gros Ventres and Blackfeet had been formed in this neighbourhood for the purpose of hunting during the summer. Growing tired, however, of so peaceful and ignoble an occupation, the younger warriors of the allied tribes determined to make an incursion into the territories of the Assiniboines. Having gone through all the requisite enchantments, they left behind them only the old men, with the women and children. After a successful campaign, they turned their steps homeward in triumph, loaded with scalps and other spoils; and on reaching the top of the ridge that overlooked the camp of the infirm and defenceless of their band, they notified their approach in the proudly-swelling tones of their song of victory. Every lodge, however, was as still and silent as the grave; and at length, singing more loudly as they advanced, in order to conceal their emotions, they found the full tale of the mangled corpses of their parents and sisters, of their wives and children. In a word, the Assiniboines had been there to take their revenge. Such is a true picture of savage warfare, and perhaps too often of civilised warfare also—calamity to both sides, and advantage to neither. On beholding the dismal scene, the bereaved conquerors cast away their spoils, arms, and clothes; and then putting on robes of leather, and smearing their heads with mud, they betook themselves to the hills for three days and nights, to howl, and mourn, and cut their flesh. This mode of expressing grief bears a very close resemblance to the corresponding custom among the Jews in almost every particular.' Let us add the following more satisfactory exploit:—'One of the Crees, whom we saw at Gull Lake, had been tracked into the valley, along with his wife and family, by five youths of a hostile tribe. On perceiving the odds that were against him, the man gave himself up for lost, observing to the woman that, as they could die but once, they had better make up their minds to submit to their present fate without resistance. The wife, however, replied, that as they had but one life to lose, they were the more decidedly bound to defend it to the last, even under the most desperate circumstances; adding that, as they were young, and by no means pitiful, they had an additional motive for preventing their hearts from becoming small. Then suiting the action to the word, the heroine brought the foremost warrior to the earth with a bullet, while the husband, animated by a mixture of shame and hope, disposed of two more of the enemy with his arrows. The fourth, who had by this time come to pretty close quarters, was ready to take vengeance on the courageous woman, with uplifted tomahawk, when he stumbled and fell; and in the twinkling of an eye the dagger of his intended victim was buried in his heart. Dismayed at the death of his four companions, the sole survivor of the assailing party saved himself by flight, after wounding his male opponent by a ball in the arm.'

The main staple of the fur-trade is the beaver, owing more to its abundance and to the steady demand for it in the hat manufacture, than to the value of the skin, which is inferior to that of the martin and sea-otter. The habits of the beaver are well known, and its almost human wisdom in the construction of its dwellings, and the government of the republics in which it lives; but one curious fact, not so well known as the rest, is mentioned by Dr Richardson, that although the animals do not begin building till the latter end of August, they fell the wood, like knowing carpenters, early in summer. Some are taken in traps by single adventurers; but trenching, which admits of the young animals being allowed to escape, is the only mode permitted by the Company. The canals leading to the beaver-house are stopped; the dwelling broken open by means of an ice-



chisel, and the parents speared; while the children are allowed to grow old enough to continue the line, and get up the fur.

The martin stands next in trade, and its fur is usually sold in Europe as sable, the real sable being but little imported. The mink, fisher, fox, and musk-rat (the last a kind of beaver) yield furs of less value. The black bear is very plentiful. It is killed by means of the fowling-piece, but is so fierce an animal, that the service is considered dangerous. The Indians treat him with great respect, even when they have slain him, calling him their relation and grandmother, and offering the pipe. The hide of the wolf is much used in Germany for knapsacks. This animal is killed chiefly by the spring-gun, although it not unfrequently cuts the cord and carries off the bait without troubling the piece to discharge itself. The sea-otter is confined to the coast of the Pacific, where it is caught on the rocks, or chased out to sea, and taken when exhausted. The lynx is a species of cat, but is timid, and easily killed.

The principal stations of the Company are York Fort, Moose Fort, Montreal, and Fort Vancouver. The first of these is the most important, and commands the whole region westward between Hudson's Bay and the Rocky Mountains, and northwards to the Arctic Sea. The inferior stations depending upon it are on the coast of the Bay, and on the principal lakes or rivers. Moose Fort is at the southern extremity of the Bay, and presides over the expanse of country as far as the Canadian lakes. Montreal is the centre of the Canadian business, although there, as we have remarked, the spread of population has greatly injured the game. Fort Vancouver is on the Columbia River, on the American side of the forty-ninth parallel which forms the line of the British territory; and in the vicinity is an agricultural settlement, composed chiefly of retired officers of the Company.

These, and their dependencies, are the trading stations; but on Red River, at the southern side of the territory, is the only settlement which is entitled to the name of a colony. This was formed by the late Lord Selkirk in 1813, with the view of carrying into practice his plans of colonisation. He purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company an extensive district, watered by the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, and with a soil well calculated for the purposes of agriculture. 'With respect to the Red River settlement,' says Sir George Simpson, 'it may be mentioned that the Hudson's Bay Company, after making the grant of land alluded to, appointed, by virtue of the powers given to them by their royal charter, a governor of the district in which the colony was to be planted; and Lord Selkirk nominated the same gentleman to take the principal and personal charge of his settlers. The first body of emigrants was composed chiefly of a small number of hardy mountaineers from Scotland, a party well adapted to act as pioneers, to encounter and overcome the difficulties they might meet with in their route. When the new governor of the district, thus attended, first arrived at the spot fixed upon for the settlement, he immediately began to prepare for the arrival of the first detachment of the regular colonists and their families, building houses for them, and making every practicable arrangement for their reception. In the beginning of the year 1813 the settlers amounted to about a hundred persons; early in 1814 there arrived about fifty more; and in the autumn of the same year their numbers amounted to two hundred. An additional hundred soon afterwards arrived at Hudson's Bay from the Highlands of Scotland to join the settlement; having been encouraged to migrate thither by letters they had received from their friends settled at Red River.

'During the first years of the establishment—owing to occurrences of a peculiarly unfortunate nature, over which the colonists had no control—the settlement advanced but slowly. From about the year 1821, however, it seemed fixed and secure. A considerable number of the Scotch, indeed, were at various times tempted to

remove to the United States; but the general body, consisting chiefly of Highlanders, Orkney-men, together with a number of half-breeds, remained fixed at the settlement. The latter class (half-breeds), of every stock, derive their aboriginal blood generally from the Swampy Crees, the similarity of whose language to that of the Chippeways would make one suppose they were branches of the same original trunk. Exclusive of the settlers above-mentioned, many of the old and retired servants of the Hudson's Bay Company are in the habit of establishing themselves, with their families, at the settlement. Lord Selkirk died in 1820, since which event no efforts have been made to bring colonists to the Red River from Europe; but the census, which is taken at regular intervals, numbers at present above five thousand souls; and in spite of the occasional emigrations from the Red River towards the Mississippi and the Columbia, it appears that the population is found to double every twenty years.'

This colony has pushed itself forward along the banks of the Red River almost to Lake Winnipeg, at forty or fifty miles' distance. It has Catholic and Protestant churches, and a large and flourishing school. 'The soil of Red River Settlement is a black mould of considerable depth, which, when first tilled, produces extraordinary crops—as much on some occasions as forty returns of wheat; and even after twenty successive years of cultivation, without the relief of manure, or of fallow, or of green crop, it still yields from fifteen to twenty-five bushels an acre. The wheat produced is plump and heavy; there are also large quantities of grain of all kinds, besides beef, mutton, pork, butter, cheese, and wool in abundance. In addition to agriculture, or sometimes in place of it, the settlers, more particularly those of mixed origin, devote first the summer, and then the autumn, and sometimes the winter also, to the hunting of the buffalo, bringing home vast quantities of pemmican, dried meat, grease, tongues, &c. for which the Company's voyaging business affords the best market; and even many of the stationary agriculturists send oxen and carts, on shares, to help the poorer hunters to convey their booty to the settlement.'

On the west coast of the continent of America, intersected by the fiftieth degree of north latitude, and at some distance north of the Columbia River, lies Vancouver's Island, a British possession which, till the present time, has remained in a state of nature. With a view to the plantation of one or more settlements on this insular spot, the Hudson's Bay Company, as is well known, has acquired from government certain privileges. The ministers of the crown have been much blamed for turning over the task of colonising Vancouver's Island to a Company which has hitherto shown itself greatly averse to the spread of population upon its territory. We are not sure, however, that the experiments of government itself in that way have been so successful as to make emigrants desire very much to place themselves in its hands; and it should likewise be observed that the anti-colonising policy of the Company does not apply with nearly such force to the Pacific side as to the main portions of the territory. Properly worked, the privilege of colonising Vancouver's Island may prove of great public benefit. It is not to be forgotten that the original North American colonies were settled by trading associations; and how successful these settlements were, needs not to be particularised.

With respect to the capabilities of Vancouver's Island, it is thus spoken of by Simpson:—'The southern end is well adapted for cultivation; for, in addition to a tolerable soil and a moderate climate, it possesses excellent harbours and abundance of timber. It will doubtless become, in time, the most valuable section of the whole coast above California.' The natives appear to be interesting. 'Behind Point Roberts there was a large camp of about a thousand savages, inhabitants of Vancouver's Island, who periodically cross the

gulf to Frazer's River, for the purpose of fishing. A great number of canoes assisted us in bringing our wood and water from the shore, some of them paddled entirely by young girls of remarkably interesting and comely appearance. These people offered us salmon, potatoes, berries, and shell-fish for sale. The channel between this island and the mainland does not in any place exceed six miles in breadth, and the shores on both sides are so mountainous, that the peaks are covered with perpetual snow. Along the whole coast the savages live well, having abundance of excellent fish and venison. Both men and women are well grown, with regular and pleasing features, and the girls decidedly pretty. 'The northern end of Vancouver's Island would be an excellent position for the collecting and curing of salmon, which, being incredibly numerous in these waters, might easily be rendered one of the most important articles of trade in this country. The neighbouring Newettes, a brave and friendly tribe, would be valuable auxiliaries not only in aiding the essential operations of the establishment, but also in furnishing supplies of venison.'

A contemporary periodical speaks thus of the island:—'Returning to the geographical situation of Vancouver's Island, we see that it not only possesses the most important harbours on the north-west coast of the American continent, but that it commands for eighty miles the straits which lead to those in the territory of the United States. It follows, then, of necessity, that this island must become the focus of all the trade which shall at any future period flow in the north of Western America. Men will not always circumnavigate the globe to convey merchandise from one point to another. They will not take goods round Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope, on the way from Canton to New York. The Oriental trade of America will *infallibly*, some day, find its way across the American continent. The time may be nearer than we like to predict, who shrink from the charge of extravagant enthusiasm; but whenever it does arrive, the Straits of Juan de Fuca will become the funnel through which it will be poured into the New World. For the same reason that Tyre or Venice rose to be great on the earth, will the people who dwell around those straits become mighty in their generation.'

We have only to add, that the American government has already contracted for the conveyance of mails by steam between Panama and the Oregon territory; and this brings Vancouver's Island within the reach of regular correspondence.

### FEMALE SELF-DEVOTEDNESS.

A SKETCH FROM REAL LIFE.

Nor very far from a cathedral town in one of the midland counties, and on the banks of a broad and rapid river, there stood a low-built white stone-cottage, surrounded by colonnades and trellised work, whose tasteful garden, gay with brilliant and variegated flowers, and emerald lawn, sloped down to the water's edge.

This cottage was inhabited by three sisters, the two eldest still retaining traces of having been dowered in their youth with an extreme beauty, which had left only a faint and shadowy lustre behind; while the perfect repose of expression, which characterised the ordinary features of the youngest lady, was as far removed from apathetic indifference or lassitude of mind as sulkiness and discontent from heavenly resignation. The seclusion in which these ladies passed their lives had no mystery attached to it, while at the same time it was marked by somewhat of romantic interest; indeed many of the townfolk had learnt to regard them much in the same light as nuns were looked upon in days of yore, their religious bias and charitable influ-

ence shedding a reflected lustre on the domain and adjacent lands.

The Misses Dynevor were the daughters of a deceased cathedral dignitary. Miss Rosabel, the second, had been betrothed five-and-thirty years before to a gallant officer, who fell in the Peninsular war: this shock completely prostrated and shattered her mind, and brought on a tedious illness. During many years, the eldest sister, Miss Floribel, had devoted herself to the sufferer with that devotion and patience which belong to the affections and heroism of private life; the minds of both were sobered down from youth's giddiness by that which had been a mutual grief; and even when time, the restorer and healer, progressed towards a cure, they looked on the world with different eyes and different wishes from those of their early days.

On their father's decease, determined to seek a retirement congenial to their habits and wishes, and finding Fawns Home put up for sale, they became the purchasers; and here they had dwelt for a length of time in monastic privacy. Their existence passed in a monotonous unvaried routine; and but for the fact of their domicile speaking for itself, and their old domestic and factotum Mr Matthew speaking for them, they might have been forgotten by the world around: for although their alms-deeds were judicious and abundant, yet it was literally true as regarded them, that 'the right hand knew not what the left did.' And as the almoner and dispenser of their bounties, the venerable Mr Matthew was as close and strict in observing secrecy as retainers imbued with no inordinate share of gossiping propensities usually are, so the details which transpired only aroused and tampered with curiosity without gratifying it.

The Misses Dynevor's nearest living relative was a paternal uncle, whose age did not much exceed that of his eldest niece, and who, having made a fortune in the East, was now expected home, unmarried and childless. The gossips of the cathedral town had already decided that the ladies of Fawns Home would be their uncle's acknowledged co-heiresses; and though no reason had ever been assigned for Miss Geneviève's sharing her sisters' seclusion, there were two or three grayheaded individuals who slightly remembered having heard rumours of a disappointment in love, which had soured her temper—for she had never been like her elder sisters: they were gay and beautiful young women, while Geneviève, as a plain and moping girl, had evinced few traits likely to gain her popularity or distinction.

But the peace and concord of the retired inmates of Fawns Home was undisturbed by conjecture or gossip: there affection and unanimity ever walked hand in hand. Each Sabbath morning a comfortably-awned boat might be seen waiting beside their garden steps, to convey the ladies, with their domestics, to the point of landing nearest the cathedral, to which a short walk conducted them; and where, ensconced in a deeply-curtained pew, they were entirely screened from observation. The occupants of the pleasure-boats, passing and repassing this river-road, often saw the figures of the three sisters gliding amid the colonnades or emerging from the shrubberies. Sometimes they appeared to be busily employed in gardening; sometimes sauntering, book in hand, or arm in arm, engaged in converse; sounds of music floated across the water at intervals; and in the summer evenings, the sweet scent wafted on the balmy breeze from the gardens of Fawns Home, and the delicious quietude pervading the place, tempted

many idlers to rest on their oars, while they spoke in whispers, as if unwilling to disturb the serenity. Colonies of song-birds seemed to seek refuge here, and the concert of the groves was unique and perfect; while beneath the overhanging boughs some graceful fawns might be seen standing on the river's brink, playfully darting away, or slaking their thirst with watchful glance. Intrusive visitors, in times gone by, had often endeavoured to penetrate within the pleasant precincts; but a firm and consistent rejection of all overtures which might tend to social intercourse overruled the difficulties of their position, and the Misses Dynevor, 'the nuns of Fawns Home,' at length found themselves and their strange ways uninterfered with.

A few months preceding the period at which I have introduced them to the reader, a new inmate had been admitted as a resident member of the well-arranged household: this was a girl of about fifteen years of age, who appeared to be under the peculiar care and patronage of Miss Geneviève. The young stranger, indeed, read to the elder ladies, whose sight was not so good as it had been; she also assisted them in tending the favourite flower-baskets; she helped them to feed the birds, and many other dumb pets; and her ringing laugh and bounding steps attended on them all by turns: they all loved and caressed her, and the fair girl was in some danger of being spoiled. When she first came, a good deal of sadness was perceptible; her mourning habit, indeed, might account for this; yet by degrees the soothing assiduities and tender caresses of Miss Geneviève completed the restoration to her natural happy cheerfulness, for youthful spirits are wonderfully elastic; and though by the hour together Mary Trevor would pour into her friend's ear oft-repeated tales of home and home's doings, that patient friend was never weary of listening to the details; while she sympathised with her charge, counselled and smiled, and finally won as much sweet and pure affection as one guileless human being can bestow on another.

One day during the summer following Mary Trevor's domestication, an unusual bustle and excitement pervading the orderly household signified that some event not in the usual routine had occurred: this was no less than the arrival of the Misses Dynevor's rich uncle, who may be introduced sitting in an easy-chair, placed by the open window of the pleasant library looking forth on garden sweets, and the sparkling river beyond, and saying, 'Well, niece Flory, if my looks had worn as well as yours, I should have much reason for content'—he was a withered, yellow-looking gentleman, with inquisitive eyes, and a nose poking everywhere (like a thin Paul Pry without an umbrella)—'but Indian suns and Indian life don't tend to improve the complexion. And so you have mewed yourself up here all these years, and never thought of marrying (you are only a few years my junior, you know), and all for the sake of keeping poor Rosy company?'

'My dear uncle,' interrupted Miss Dynevor in a deprecatory tone, 'it is not every one who has a vocation for wedded life: I always had a desire to live as we are now doing!'

'Humph! you are a good girl, Flory, and a kind one,' answered her uncle; 'but there are three of you. Has Geneviève had "no vocation" for matrimony either?'

A silence which ensued was broken by the entrance of Mary Trevor; and on her being named to Mr Dynevor, he seemed rather puzzled, and musingly repeated, 'Trevor, Trevor! the name is familiar to me. When I was last in England, and you were quite a girl then, Jenny, had not your father an assistant chaplain of that name? Cecil Trevor—to be sure—now I am clear! He was a handsome lad, but a little too volatile for his vocation: I remember he had run through a mint of money at college, and his father threatened to disinherit him if he didn't retrieve and amend, by marrying a lady of fortune. Why, I thought he had a kindness for you, Jenny: I am sure you had for him.'

'Mary, my dear, will you go into the greenhouse and gather me a bouquet?' said Miss Dynevor, at the same time casting an appealing glance towards her uncle, who, however, was usually unobservant of such hints, and on whom the agitation visible in Geneviève's demeanour was lost, as well as the silent tear trickling down her cheek.

His attention, however, was diverted by this movement towards Mary, who left the room, followed by Geneviève. 'That is a very lovely girl,' quoth Uncle Dynevor. 'Her name is Trevor, you say? Any relation to the Cecil Trevor we have been speaking of? By the by, how did that affair end between him and Jenny: I thought she was destined for his wife?'

'And so she was, uncle,' answered Miss Dynevor: 'some other time you shall hear the history, and then you will reverence our sweet Geneviève's noble nature: all I have time to tell you at present is, that Mr Trevor has been dead many years, and the young girl whom you have just seen is now an orphan, "Cecil's" only daughter, and our sister's adopted child.'

Uncle Dynevor looked very uncomfortable and fidgetty: he did not perfectly comprehend what he had been told, and curiosity was a kind of disease with him; the desire to gain information, as the feeling is mildly denominated, rendering him, when thwarted, taciturn and subdued: however, there was a dignity and decision in Miss Dynevor's manner which operated as a check upon further questioning at present. Mr Dynevor was of a suspicious as well as inquisitive nature; his suspicions were continually aroused as to the motives of any persons who might show him kindness or attention: he never forgot his wealth, and he imagined that no one else did. But with his three nieces he felt at ease on this point: for he knew they enjoyed an ample sufficiency, and beheld their contentment and independence of the world. He knew they desired no more riches, and began to feel at a loss as to how he should dispose of his own. These thoughts continually haunted him; and after he had sojourned for a space at Fawns Home, they took the form of words, as he walked one evening with Geneviève, evidently his favourite niece, on a pathway parallel with the river, and overhanging the stream. Her soft voice, speaking the thoughts of piety and love, emanations of a pure and tranquil mind, had a beneficial effect on the world-worn man; he felt soothed and peaceful, with a strong desire to indulge in confidential discourse; nor longer could he refrain from saying, 'I wish you had married, my dear Jenny, and had a numerous tribe of little ones around you; then I should have known what to do with my money; but now I've nobody in the world I care to give it to while I am alive, or when I am dead, for you and your sisters don't want it.'

The colour mounted to Geneviève's pale face as she answered in a low voice, 'Although I am unmarried, dear Uncle Dynevor, yet I have adopted children, who are inexpressibly dear to me: if you will assist me with a portion of your wealth for their benefit I shall heartily thank you.'

This was plain-speaking indeed; and Uncle Dynevor stopped in his walk up and down the terrace, and gazed with amazement on his niece; but the self-possession and calm truthfulness with which she met his glance disarmed all resentment, if resentment he had momentarily felt, on hearing such a proposition. Curiosity, however, was fairly aroused, and he begged for an explanation of her singular request.

'Uncle Dynevor,' said Geneviève, 'I know that you have desired to hear my simple story, and I will not allow any selfish shrinking from painful remembrances to withhold me from imparting the knowledge which may perhaps arouse your interest in behalf of the orphans under my care. I heard you say that you recollected Cecil Trevor: we were betrothed—and his father desired our union, as mine had powerful ecclesiastical influence, and I had the promise of a fair dower. You must make great allowances for poor Cecil in what I



am about to relate. Alas! I scarcely know how to do so! You know, uncle, I was always a decidedly plain girl, and he was a passionate admirer of beauty: he forgot his engagement to me, and they pronounced him dishonoured when he married an obscure individual, whose virtuous conduct and fascinations of person formed the only excuse for so rash and imprudent an act. Disinherited by his own father, who died soon after, and utterly discarded by mine, who never forgave the slight, Cecil Trevor disappeared from the world altogether; and I heard that he had accepted a distant curacy, obtained through the kindness of a college friend, which barely afforded support for his family. Thither former clamorous creditors followed; debts and difficulties unceasingly harassed and oppressed him; and in six years from the date of his marriage, this high-spirited and gifted being sunk broken-hearted into the grave. On his deathbed he wrote to my father, who was then insensible, and on the eve of dissolution, imploring his interest on behalf of the widow and four children, who were left utterly destitute and unprotected. A few weeks afterwards, I made my way to poor Cecil's grave, and clasped his orphans to my heart. Mrs Trevor never recovered the shock of her husband's loss, to whom she had been tenderly attached, and continued ill health prevented her from making any personal exertions. It was impossible to separate Mary from her afflicted mother, so that her education has been much neglected; but she is an apt scholar, and a docile, affectionate child; and when she lost her surviving parent a few months ago, and came to reside with us, through the kind permission of my sisters, I felt as if some long-lost happiness had arisen within me, for now she is all my own. Cecil, my eldest son (you smile, dear uncle), is at college; he has shown a decided predilection for the church, and as I wish to give his brothers the same advantages, I am rather straitened for means sometimes. Now, can you understand my impertinent speech, dear uncle, and why I desire your assistance some day? Ah! could you but see my three boys, how good and beautiful they are, you too would love these fatherless ones!

'And is it possible, Jenny,' said Mr Dynevor, 'that you have done all this for the children of him who slighted and rejected you? Either your Christian charity must be perfect, or you must have loved Cecil Trevor to an extraordinary degree.'

'Ah! dear uncle, I am but an imperfect Christian,' and Geneviève's voice was tremulous, and the light of other days shone in her gentle eyes; 'but you are right in your other supposition.'

'This is indeed true love, Jenny!' exclaimed Mr Dynevor; 'and you are a noble creature. You must introduce me to your adopted sons; little Mary is my pet already, you know. Ha, ha! and so the old uncle has found a family ready made for him, with plenty of calls on his purse it would seem!'

Mr Dynevor embraced the earliest opportunity of informing his elder nieces that he was acquainted with the facts of Geneviève's story from her own lips: those worthy ladies added still further information, for they expatiated on their sister's generous conduct, how she had entirely devoted her time and fortune to comfort and support Cecil Trevor's widow and children; they dwelt on her self-denial, utter self-forgetfulness, her serenity, and uncomplaining cheerfulness of disposition. These were themes which the Misses Dynevor never wearied of; and although they did not speak of the conduct of the 'disinherited' in the same extenuating terms as Geneviève did, yet they allowed that he had died a humbled and a penitent man.

'He never was worthy of our sister,' softly ejaculated Miss Rosabel.

'It would be difficult to meet with any one who *was*,' peremptorily added Miss Dynevor; to which assertion her uncle cordially assented.

Mr Dynevor never again was at a loss how to dispose of his riches; and when surrounded, as he frequently

was, by the orphan family, with 'Mamma Geneviève' at their head, his blessed and newly-born feelings often made him say to himself, 'After all, what is the good of wealth except to contribute to the happiness and well-being of others?'

### SNAKES IN AUSTRALIA.

MANY emigrants who arrive in Australia entertain exaggerated notions respecting the dangers arising from snakes. It is true all are of a venomous nature; but comparatively few persons suffer from them. The most common species are of various shades of brown, black, or slate colour; and in size they range from 12 or 14 inches to as many feet in length. It is believed generally that the smaller varieties are the most venomous; but there are scarcely grounds for this supposition, for I have known death to have repeatedly resulted from bites inflicted by the larger kinds. They differ in many points from the serpents of other countries, nor is there any representative of the rattlesnake family in Australia. They in general frequent certain localities in preference to others, and it is dangerous to walk in the bush in some places without particular caution; and no one should sit down upon any fallen half-decayed tree without a previous inspection of the spot. Twice in one forenoon, during a shooting excursion, did a gentleman, in stepping over fallen timber, very nearly place his foot each time upon a large brown snake, although he walked very circumspectly; and on the borders of a swamp near George's River I have known a dozen to be killed in the same space of time.

The largest kind is, I believe, a species of *boa*, called by the colonists in general the 'diamond-snake,' from the shape of the spots marking its skin: the names given to the different varieties are, however, conflicting, and vary in different localities. It sometimes attains to the length of 12 or 14 feet, but in general is much smaller. Respecting one of these, the following incident lately occurred:—A youth of ten years one day took a stroll in the neighbouring bush. He was walking along the margin of a swamp, when he espied a large diamond-snake lying coiled up in a pretty deep hollow, formed by the uprooting of a tree, and a little watching assured him of its being asleep. Not at all afraid, he cut a large stick with his pocket-knife, and sharpened one end, for he had noticed that the reptile lay with its head flat to the ground, and he did not wish to bruise its skin, for he had a brother who was studying medicine in Scotland, who had expressed a wish for specimens of natural history, and he considered this a good opportunity of securing a very fine one. He thought he could manage to pin it down by the neck, and then cut its throat with his pocket-knife, keeping it all the time in the hole it was then lying in, where he had it at advantage. He crept up, and succeeded cleverly enough in doing the first; but the last was no easy task: he had never before seen so large a snake, and had no conception of its strength. It was fortunate that the stick was strong and sharp, for he thus kept its head down, though, owing to the softness of the soil, he did so with difficulty; but he speedily found that instead of cutting its throat, he would be lucky if he could cut his new acquaintance in any way; for in spite of his precautions, the snake got its tail partly hooked round one of its assailant's legs, and the danger was imminent if more of the body should coil round. After many minutes' hard fighting, he managed, by a dexterous jerk, to cast off the portion entangled, and then threw the end of the pole from him, and the snake shaking himself free, would have made off; but his antagonist was determined not to lose him, and being now not so particular about the skin, a few blows from the heavy stick soon settled the business. He hung him over a low bough, and went for aid to carry him home; but on his return, it was discovered twined amongst the topmost boughs. The visitor, however,

mounted, and uncoiling the folds, jerked him down, as it was now powerless for mischief. It measured more than 10 feet in length, and was of considerable thickness. It was thought a bold act for so young a lad to attack alone so formidable a reptile.

In large towns there is seldom any chance of danger arising, although I have sometimes known carts, sent into the bush to collect firewood, to be the means of bringing snakes into Sydney; the wood selected being decayed, and often hollow, affording the opportunity of the reptiles' conveyance. A gentleman in that town once lost a valuable dog from the bite of one thus introduced into the yard where the animal was kept. Upon one occasion a man who was collecting fuel had a very narrow escape; he displayed great presence of mind; had it been otherwise, he in all probability would have been bitten. He had raised a large log upon his shoulder, and was about to carry it to the cart, when suddenly a snake glided over the wood close to his face and slipped off at the instant he flung the log from him. With the same movement he looked down, but no reptile was there; the ground at that spot was quite bare, and could not have concealed it; nor was it hidden in anyway by the wood. In short, he instantly became aware of the unpleasant fact, that the snake was in *his pocket*! He had on, besides his shirt, a pair of loose trousers, fastened round his waist by a leathern belt, the right pocket of which was large, and its flap hanging wide open; and into its open mouth had the reptile slipped on falling. For some time he stood, expecting every moment to see the head thrust out; but it kept still. With a quiet and gentle hand, therefore, he unbuckled the belt of his trousers, and slowly drew his feet together; and then gradually lowering the garment to his ankles, he cleverly freed his feet from the folds, the latter process being the more dangerous, as his bare legs might have suffered had the reptile then protruded its head. He then drew the trousers along by one leg, and shook out and killed it.

One variety is called the 'carpet-snake,' from the peculiar pattern formed by the colouring of its skin. These are fatally venomous. A party in an orchard were once much alarmed: one of their number having ascended a peach-tree to procure some of the fruit, had nearly grasped the folds of a carpet-snake, which was coiled up amongst the leaves. The fright of the discovery caused him to fall to the ground, though luckily without much injury in consequence. This snake was killed, as was also another by the same party, as it swam across the Nepean river; indeed I believe that most snakes can swim well, and that many errors have arisen by persons describing water serpents, which were in reality common land snakes. The banks of rivers, and particularly the margins of small creeks, are favourite places of resort for them in very hot weather.

Some of the smaller varieties are beautiful. One day, at a villa a few miles from Sydney, a lady stepping out from the window of the drawing-room on to the lawn, observed lying on the gravel walk a small crooked stick, finely covered with different-coloured mosses, as she thought. She stooped to pick it up, and examine it narrowly. It was a small snake!—one of the most deadly kind. Luckily she held it so slightly, that its first struggle caused it to slide from her grasp. She wished to have it preserved, on account of its beauty; but the gardener severed it with his spade.

Although perhaps there are scarcely any entirely harmless snakes in Australia, similar to those which sometimes inhabit the houses in the West Indies, it is probable that many are venomous, without being necessarily fatally so. Some gentlemen were once shooting in the woods in company with a black native, when one of them was bitten by a snake, which the black fellow fortunately saw before it escaped. The sufferer almost immediately became very ill, sick, and faint;

and naturally concluding he was doomed, he hastily pulled out his pocket-book, in order to leave some dying directions in writing. The black fellow, however, comforted him by the assurance of 'Baal you die yet; only murry yalla, by and by directly'—('You will not die yet; but only turn very yellow soon.') Nor did he die; and he did turn very yellow, although I could not ascertain whether this was owing to any action upon the liver causing retention of the bile, or to some other effect of the virus.

The inhabitants of Windsor once had an opportunity of witnessing the operation of sucking the wound caused by a snake-bite, as performed by a black fellow. The man bitten was employed in making the three-railed fences which in the colony are the substitutes for the more picturesque hedgerows used at home. He had stooped to lift a fence from a heap on the ground, and was bitten in the act; he was alone at the time, and had endeavoured to reach the town, which was at no great distance; but his strength had failed, and he was found lying in the middle of the road, vainly endeavouring to drink at a puddle collected there. He was carried into town, and a black fellow immediately summoned. Upon his arrival, making a great parade of the occasion and his office, he called for some salt; and placing a quantity in his mouth, began to suck. He pulled away for a long time, often causing great pain to the patient; and then, indicating that no one was to follow and watch him, he ran off for some distance in the bush. Curiosity induced one or two to creep after; and they approached near enough to observe that he spat with great vehemence, and with wild gestures; and, as they thought, with strange words in his own language. In about a quarter of an hour he came running back at full speed, saying he had not got it all yet; and recommenced sucking with renewed vigour; which he continued doing for many minutes more, and then repeated his former manœuvres. In half an hour he santered back quite composed, and told the man he would not die. He did recover.

The lady above-mentioned who mistook a snake for a moss-covered stick, was once witness to a remarkable instance of fascination by terror, caused by the unexpected and sudden sight of a large serpent. She was strolling with a female companion in a spot where, owing to the frequent occurrence of little patches of low scrub, they were often slightly separated. Finding herself alone, after walking a little time, Miss B—— turned to look for her companion, and saw her standing at some distance, apparently looking fixedly at some object a little way before her. After waiting a few moments, she spoke, but received no answer; and observing that her friend still kept the same posture, which was rather a strange one, she walked towards her, and when near enough to distinguish her features, was quite frightened at her appearance. One hand was placed, as for support, against a young sapling which grew by her side; the other was extended before her, at arms-length, in the manner of repelling; the body was slightly drawn back, the head thrown forward. Her eyes were fixed, distended, and glaring; the lips apart; there was no heaving of the chest; the whole frame was rigid and motionless. Miss B—— was terrified beyond measure: she again spoke, but, as before, received no reply: she looked in the direction of her companion's gaze, but saw nothing, the ground for many yards being scattered over with a thin scrub. She moved closer up to her side, and again looked, and for a few moments was almost as much terrified. On the ground, at a few yards' distance, partly coiled, as though ready to spring, with its hideous head erect, and its fiery blazing eyes gleaming with malignity, its fangs exposed, and its forked tongue playing with a quick and tremulous motion—which, in the afternoon's sun, assumed the appearance and coruscations of a minute stream of lightning—was a huge snake. Mrs A—— made a movement forwards, as though impelled irresistibly; and this recalled her companion from her



momentary trance of terror, who seized her by the arm with a loud scream, which startled away the reptile, and Mrs A— sunk down, completely overcome by the revulsion of feeling. The house was close by, and assistance soon procured. Mrs A— is a remarkably beautiful woman, and Miss B— often afterwards remarked that a magnificent study she would at that moment have presented to a painter of genius.

It must not be supposed for an instant, however, that any danger arising from these reptiles is of a nature or amount calculated to create any serious obstacle or drawback to the intending emigrant to the Australian colonies, any more than the same thing in respect to America or Canada, the West Indies or India. The above notes, scanty as they are, were all the personal observations and facts collected during many years' residence; and although perhaps they look formidable enough when collected, nevertheless many a resident in the colony of long standing, and who has perhaps never once seen a snake (and there are many such), will read this article with as much interest, and probably as great a sensation of novelty, as the intending emigrant who has not yet left these shores.

#### JOHN FOSTER THE ESSAYIST.

JOHN FOSTER, whose essays are justly ranked among the most original and valuable works of the day, was born in 1770, in the Vale of Todmorden, whose serene beauties, and the quiet associations of humble life, may be said to have moulded his retiring habits and vigorous cast of thought. Like Hall, Mr Foster was pastor of a Baptist congregation; and after running his useful course, he died in 1843, at Stapleton, near Bristol, where he had resided for the last thirty years of his life.

Further than these few particulars, it is unnecessary to say anything biographically of Foster. The remarkable thing about him was his ardent and pure *thinking*. If ever there was a man who may be said, in the language of the old paradox, to have been 'never less alone than when alone, and never more occupied than when at leisure,' that man was John Foster. The exercises of the Christian ministry, in which a considerable portion of his life was engaged, were conducted for the most part in a noiseless manner, and in the shadiest nooks of the field of labour; so that when his now celebrated essays came forth to the public, they were to all, but a few, virtually anonymous publications. No one who has deeply acquainted himself with these admirable productions, will need to have repeated to him that profound laborious thought was the business of Foster's life; and the absence of this mental habitude in others, especially in those who occupied the more conspicuous positions in society, was often lamented by him with a bitterness which might almost have been mistaken for misanthropy.

This habit of mind showed itself in a remarkable manner both in his ministerial exercises and in his ordinary conversation. The character of both was such, as to impress upon the hearer the notion that he was merely thinking aloud. There was no physical animation or gesture, none of that varied intonation which commonly graduates the intensity of excitement. He threw out all the originality of his views, and the boundless variety of his illustrations, in a deep monotonous tone, which seemed the only natural vehicle for such weighty, comprehensive conceptions. This was only varied by an earnest emphasis, so frequent in every sentence, as to show how many modifying expressions there were which it was necessary to keep in distinct view, in order fully to realise the idea of the speaker. It may be added here, though it would be impossible, in a brief sketch like the present, to touch upon such a subject otherwise than in passing, that the same peculiarity is obvious in all his published productions. To a superficial reader their style might seem loaded and redundant, but on closer examination, it will be found

that this unusual copiousness of modifying epithets and clauses arose from that fulness of thought, and consequent necessity for compression, which compelled him, if he must prescribe limits to his composition, to group in every sentence, and around every main idea, a multitude of attendant ones, which a more diffuse writer would have expanded into paragraphs. Hence his writings are not really *obscure*, but only *difficult*, demanding the same vigorous exertion of thought in the reader which is exercised in the writer. The observation, therefore, of the late Robert Hall, in his well-known review of Foster's Essays, appears to be more ingenious and beautiful than critically correct. The error, however, if it be such, might almost have been expected from so perfect a master of the euphonous style as Mr Hall—a writer who, in the words of Dugald Stewart, combined all the literary excellencies of Burke, Addison, and Johnson. 'The author,' says Mr Hall, 'has paid too little attention to the construction of his sentences. They are for the most part too long, sometimes involved in perplexity, and often loaded with redundancies. They have too much of the looseness of a harangue, and too little of the compact elegance of regular composition. An occasional obscurity pervades some parts of the work. The mind of the writer seems at times to struggle with conceptions too mighty for his grasp, and to present confused masses rather than distinct delineations of thought. This is, however, to be imputed to the originality, not the weakness, of his powers. The scale on which he thinks is so vast, and the excursions of his imagination are so extended, that they frequently carry him into the most unbeaten track, and among objects where a ray of light glances in an angle only, without diffusing itself over the whole.'

Reference has been made to the solitary habits of Mr Foster's life. It must not be supposed, however, that he was, to use his own expression, the 'grim solitaire.' He chose as the partner of his retirement a lady whose talents and force of character he ever held in high and deserved respect. It is generally believed that when Mr Foster proposed to her that union which subsequently took place, she declared that she would marry no one that had not distinguished himself in the literature of his day, and Foster's Essays in 'Letters to a Friend' were the *billets-doux* of this extraordinary courtship. It is amusing to recollect that after the first evening which Foster spent in company with his future wife, he described her as a 'marble statue surrounded with iron palisades.'

The high walls with which his residence at Stapleton was surrounded, and which permitted not a glimpse of the house or garden, seemed to proclaim inaccessibility, and to say to the visitor, as plainly as walls can speak, 'No admittance.' No sooner, however, were these difficulties surmounted by the good offices of an old servant, who seemed a sort of natural appendage to her master, than a charming contrast was felt between the prohibitory character of the residence and the impressive but delightful affability of the occupant. His only hobby was revealed by the first glance at his apartments. The choicest engravings met the eye in every direction, which, together with a profusion of costly illustrated works, showed that if our hermit had in other respects left the world behind him, he had made a most self-indulgent reservation of the arts.

But the great curiosity of the house was a certain mysterious apartment, which was not entered by any but the recluse himself perhaps once in twenty years; and if the recollection of the writer serves him, the prohibition must have extended in all its force to domesticity of every class. This was the library. Many intreaties to be favoured with the view of this seat of privacy had been silenced by allusions to the cave of Trophonius, and in one instance to Erebus itself, and by mock-solemn remonstrances, founded on the danger of such enterprises to persons of weak nerves and fine sensibilities. At length Mr Foster's consent was obtained, and he led the way to his previously uninvaded

fastness—an event so unusual, as to have been mentioned in a letter which is published in the second volume of his 'Life and Correspondence.' The floor was occupied by scattered garments, rusty firearms, and a hillock of ashes from the grate which might well be supposed to have been the accumulation of a winter, while that which ought to have been the writing-desk of the tenant was furnished with the blackened remains of three dead pens and a dry inkstand by way of cenotaph.

Around this grotesque miscellany was ranged one of the selectest private libraries in which it was ever the good luck of a bibliomaniac to revel. The choicest editions of the best works adorned the shelves, while stowed in large chests were a collection of valuable illustrated works in which the book-worm, without a metaphor, was busy in his researches. A present of Coleridge's 'Friend' from the book-shelves is retained by the writer as a trophy of this sacrilegious invasion.

It will readily be supposed, from what has been said of the secluded habits of Mr Foster, that the intercourse of friendship must have been greatly sustained by means of correspondence. From the frequency of personal and private references in letters, a large proportion of such compositions must in all cases be withheld from the public eye, from ordinary motives of delicacy. Happily, however, without any violation of this decorum, a large body of Mr Foster's correspondence has been given to the world, the perusal of which by those who were not privileged with his friendship, must have mingled a more tender feeling with the admiration excited by his genius. The unexpressed exudation of his nature in these compositions invests them with the same charm which has been noticed as attaching to his conversation which we have designated as 'thinking aloud.' His accessibility by the young was one of the most beautiful features in his character, and will remind those of Mr Burke, who are acquainted with the more private habits of his life. The exquisite and redundant kindness of his letters to young friends is perfectly affecting, and show how necessarily simplicity and condescension are the attributes of true intellectual and moral greatness.

It would be next to impossible to convey to any one who was not acquainted with Mr Foster a correct impression of his personal appearance. His dress was uncouth, and neglected to the last degree. A long gray coat, almost of the fashion of a dressing gown; trousers which seemed to have been cherished relics of his boyhood, and to have quarrelled with a pair of gaiters, an intervening inch or two of stocking indicating the disputed territory; shoes whose solidity occasionally elicited from the wearer a reference to the equipments of the ancient Israelites; a coloured silk handkerchief, loosely tied about his neck, and an antique waistcoat of most uncanonical hue—these, with an indescribable hat, completed the philosopher's costume. In his walks to and from the city of Bristol (the latter frequently by night) he availed himself at once of the support and protection of a formidable club, which, owing to the difficulty with which a short dagger in the handle was released by a spring, he used jocosely to designate as a 'member of the Peace Society.' So utterly careless was he of his appearance, that he was not unfrequently seen in Bristol during the hot weather walking with his coat and waistcoat over his arm.

This eccentricity gave rise to some curious mistakes. On one occasion, while carrying some articles of dress, in the dusk of the evening, to the cottage of a poor man, he was accosted by a constable, who, from his appearance, suspected them to be stolen, some deprecations of the kind having been recently committed in the neighbourhood. Mr Foster conducted the man to the seat of an opulent gentleman, with whom he was engaged to spend the evening; and the confusion of the constable may be easily imagined when he was informed of the name of his prisoner, who dismissed him with hearty praise for his diligence and fidelity.

His was one of those countenances which it is impossible to forget, and yet of which no portrait very vividly reminds us. His forehead was a triumph to the physiologist, and surrounded as it was by a most uncultivated wig, might suggest the idea of a perpendicular rock crowned with straggling verdure; while his calm but luminous eye, deeply planted beneath his massive brow, might be compared to a lamp suspended in one of its caverns. In early life, his countenance, one would suppose, must have been strikingly beautiful; his features being both regular and commanding, and his complexion retaining to the last that fine but treacherous hue which probably indicated the malady that terminated his life. His natural tendency to solitary meditation never showed herself more strikingly than in his last hours. Aware of the near approach of death, he requested to be left entirely alone, and was found shortly after he had expired in a composed and contemplative attitude, as if he had thought his way to the mysteries of another world.

### SHOPS.

WHEN Charles Lamb was asked his opinion of the Vale of Keswick, and the Hills of Ambleside, he frankly acknowledged that there was more pleasure for him in the London shop-windows, when lighted up and full in the frosty evenings before Christmas. This answer, though odd and unexpected, is not surprising. Where, in the wide world, is there such an exposition of artistic wealth and magnificence as is seen daily in the London shop-windows? No doubt some of the shops of Paris and New York rival anything of the kind in the British metropolis; but, taken as a whole, the stock and the array of the London shops are unmatchable. All Orientals and Africans on visiting Europe for the first time are most struck with the splendour of the shops. There was nothing unreasonable in the request of an African king's son, whose tribe had been serviceable to the French settlements on the Senegal, in return for which the young prince was taken under the protection of Louis XIV., and sent to receive an education in Paris. After having seen and been astonished at the French capital, Louis inquired of him what would be the most desirable present for his father, promising that whatever he selected should be sent, when the youth exclaimed, with a look of the most imploring earnestness, 'Mighty monarch, let me send him a shop!'

There is a curious instance of mistaken politeness recorded of the first Chinese ambassador at the court of Versailles. For the first few days of his residence he never passed the shop-window of an eminent hairdresser without performing the great *houou*, or ceremony of nineteen prostrations, before the waxwork fashionables it contained, supposing them, as it was at length discovered, to represent the gods of the western barbarians, placed there for public adoration in a richly-decorated temple. Such a mistake was natural for a Chinese. In his country, as well as throughout the whole East, the ornaments and magnitude of European shops are unknown. What may be called the grandeur of commerce is confined to the bazaar, a species of covered market-place, or rather temporary arcade, the greater part of which is composed of mere booths or sheds; and even there the display consists merely of quantities of merchandise, with little arrangement, less accommodation, and scarcely any of that ornamental ingenuity and minute attention to business which renders the shopkeeping of Europe so complicated and remarkable. The 'money-snaring machinery,' as a late divine called it, with which most of our readers, especially in large towns, are acquainted, is not yet dreamed of by the Orientals. The ample room, the front of plate-glass, the costly fittings-up, and the splendid effects of Bude lights and mirrors; the various functionaries employed, from the card distributor to the recorder of unpersuaded customers; and the innumerable modes of

printed advertisement, more or less practised by all our commercial world, merge in Asia into a small dingy room or tent, with a wide door, before which sits the merchant of silks or diamonds, as the case may be—the former article lying in piles around him, and the latter spread so as to display their size and quality to the best advantage on a table before him; while a slave at the door loudly enumerates all, and generally much more than could be found within; and another stands by to assist the merchant in the display of his goods, and show them occasionally, by way of confirmation to the statements of his companion at the door.

Such are the establishment and assistants employed by the wealthiest and most enterprising merchants among the primitive Asiatics, with the exception of some camels and their drivers, required for the carriage of goods in the celebrated caravans. These humble accommodations are considered perfectly sufficient; but commerce in Asia, though it occupies a somewhat limited and subordinate position compared with that of Europe, has a species of peculiar etiquette, which, however grotesque it would appear to a London merchant, is regarded by its disciples as indispensable to business. The Armenians, who divide with the Greeks and Jews the entire mercantile department of Western Asia, are accustomed to sit down and weep bitterly when they have sold any article of value, declaring that the purchaser has ruined them. The Jews, on similar occasions, rend their garments, which are said to be worn purposely for the sacrifice, with still louder protestations of ruin. In later years, owing to the influx of European travellers and manners, these demonstrations have become less violent, and are evidently but an Eastern version of the 'enormous sacrifices and unprecedented bargains' set forth in our British advertisements. The Greek shopkeepers, in most of the Turkish towns, send a crier through the city to proclaim the arrival of new goods and their prices, every announcement being regularly concluded with a declaration that his employer is ruining himself, but must sell. At the great winter fairs of Asiatic Russia, merchants are to be found from the most remote cities of Hindoostan and Eastern Tartary; and travellers who have visited those scenes bring back curious accounts of their commercial fashions. The Mingrelians, who generally deal in the meerschaum pipes so highly prized and frequently imitated in Europe, consider it incumbent on them to absolutely refuse selling their goods to any customer, and the latter is expected to employ himself at least an hour in persuading the merchant to deal with him. Eastern time is not yet estimated according to railway reckoning. But a still more extraordinary custom prevails among the merchants of Thibet, famous for bringing the celebrated Cashmere shawls, the best quality of which is known to be manufactured in their country, a regular stand-up fight being required to take place between the seller and the purchaser on the disposal of any considerable quantity, the former obstinately rejecting the price to which he has already agreed, and the latter as resolutely forcing it upon him. Nor is it considered business-like to settle matters till a few blows have been exchanged on both sides, after which they peaceably shake hands, and the bargain is concluded. The Chinese carry on commerce more regularly than any other nation of the East; but those who come with tea to the Siberian fairs never transact business with their Russian customers till after what they designate a polite silence of half an hour, during which the parties sit looking at each other, chewing green ginger and tobacco; and their shopkeepers, whether at home or abroad, have a habit by no means unknown in Britain—namely, that of asking twice the amount they expect to receive.

Such are the courtesies and attractions of Oriental business; nor does it greatly differ in either appearance or practice from that of ancient Europe. From the scattered and scanty observations left us by old authors, it appears that the shopkeepers of the classic world

were in the habit of standing in their doors, extolling the quality and cheapness of their goods to the passer-by, swearing by Jupiter they had no profit on every article they sold, and placing their entire stock and premises under the protection of Mercury, the reputed god of thieves. Their mercantile accommodations in some respects corresponded to their habits. Even in Rome, when it was called the metropolis of the world, the richest shops were front apartments of small houses, the back-rooms of which the owner and his family inhabited; and the greater part of them were subdivisions of the ground-flats of houses belonging to the wealthier classes, from whom they were rented at no small valuation, as shops were reckoned among the sources of income by the nobility of Rome; and Cicero states in one of his letters that his had become so ruinous, as neither to be occupied by mice nor men. The earliest and best-preserved specimens of ancient shops were discovered by excavations made at Pompeii. The description of one of them, supposed to have been a cook's, is thus given by a writer on the subject:—The whole front was entirely open, excepting in so far as it was occupied by a broad counter of masonry, into which were built four large jars of baked earth, their tops even with the surface of the counter; behind were two small rooms containing nothing of importance. The traces of a staircase indicate that there was an upper floor. At night the whole front was closed by shutters, sliding in grooves cut in the lintel and basement-wall before the counter and by the door. There was an oven at the end of the counter farthest from the street, and three steps on the left, which were presumed to support different sorts of vessels or measures for liquids. Another of better description was of the same form; but the interior was gaily painted in blue panels, with red borders, and its counter was faced and covered with marble. The dimensions of the Pompeian shops may be guessed from an inscription found among their ruins, which states that Julia Felix, probably a lady of rank, owned no less than nine hundred of them; and the excavators remarked that no entire house appeared occupied with business. In those times commerce was in every sense conducted on a low and limited scale, and the pursuit of it seems to have been regarded, as it is still in the East, a somewhat inferior calling. Neither Greece nor Rome could boast those merchants, princely in character and fortune, by whose enterprise and liberality the maritime kingdoms of Christendom have so largely benefited.

During the ninth and tenth centuries, when Europe was in a state of complete anarchy and barbarism, owing to the dissolution of Charlemagne's empire, the Mohammedan invasions from the East, and the continual incursions of the northern Sea-kings, the only remnants of commerce that existed were in the hands of the Lombards, a Gothic people, who, having settled in Northern Italy, hence called Lombardy, on the ruin of the Roman power, were, after centuries of possession, driven out by Charlemagne for making war against the Pope; and being of the Arian faith, none of the Catholic princes would allow them to settle on their lands. The Lombards therefore betook themselves to traffic; and their style of conducting it was highly characteristic of the period. Their shops, or rather warehouses, were situated in the most solitary parts of Flanders and Lower Germany, built in the fortress fashion, with donjon keep and battlements, surrounded by a moat, which could be filled or emptied at pleasure by means of sluices; but there was no drawbridge allowed, all goods and customers being drawn up by a basket and pulley to the main entrance, a narrow stone-cased door about half way up in the building. Here the merchants lived in a kind of monastic society, bound by the strictest vows of celibacy and secrecy regarding the mysteries of their trade, and venturing forth only in well-armed companies—the military exercises being part of their daily avocations—for the purchase and transfer of goods from distant cities; on which occasions



they were attended by troops of archers, kept in constant pay for that purpose, but never allowed to enter the fortress. When customers arrived, they were obliged to sound a trumpet, which was answered by the warder, who kept watch on the battlements night and day; when, if it was thought advisable, the basket was lowered, and they were drawn up, man by man, except in times of more than ordinary danger, when samples of the goods were let down to them, and the merchants arranged matters with them from one of the loopholes. It is doubtful if shopkeeping on this principle would pay in our generation; but we live in better times. A fine contrast to it was presented by the Alpine shops of Switzerland about a century ago: they consisted of lonely huts, built at the entrance of the principal mountain-passes, the door secured by a latch from the depredations of the wolf, and the low-latticed window revealing to the passing traveller cheese, bread, coarse cloths, and almost every article his necessity could require, each with the price marked upon it, which he was expected to deposit in the money-box standing hard by, there being neither salesman nor book-keeper; in fact, not an individual within leagues of the solitary shop, the shepherd who had thus risked his little all coming once a month from the heights where his flock remained for the summer, to count and carry off his profits. The ideas from which such arrangements grew were worthy of the Golden Age; but the mountain-shops have long disappeared since steamers began to go up the Rhone and across Lake Lemane: it is even said that fashionable hotels in many instances occupy their places.

There is perhaps no foil to the pomp of London shops so complete as the Kassina of Morocco. It is a part of the town where stuffs and other articles are exposed for sale, and is composed of a number of small shops formed in the walls of the houses, about a yard from the ground, and of such a height within, as just to admit of a man's sitting cross-legged. The goods and drawers are so arranged, that he reaches every article without, and serves his customers as they stand in the street. These shops, which are found in all the towns of the empire, afford a striking example of the indolence of the Moors. Here people resort as to an Exchange in Europe—to transact business and hear news; and independent gentlemen often hire one of these shops, and pass the mornings in it for their amusement.

Still simpler are the accommodations for business in more distant African cities: the capital of Abyssinia does not contain a single shop, the place of traffic being a great plain in the vicinity, to which the merchants proceed, each accompanied by a slave laden with goods, while the master carries an umbrella and a mat; on reaching a convenient spot the mat is spread, the goods arranged upon it, the slave holds the umbrella over his master, and the shop is opened for the day, to be as quickly closed in the evening.

To return nearer home: the mountainous districts on the north-west of Ireland have yet shops whose primitive simplicity rivals the scenes of African commerce: a cabin, situated on some wild hill-side, or where a by-way leads across a lonely bog, built of the native peat-moss, thatched with rushes, and having a large turf or piece of dry sod suspended over the entrance by way of sign, which indicates that milk, coarse provisions of all sorts, and occasionally malt spirits of illicit distillation, may be bought within. Of course the stock in trade of such warehouses is rather limited; but they have one convenience unknown to more splendid fabrics—that of being removed, premises and all, in the course of a forenoon, which is sometimes effected on account of the wind blowing too keenly in the ever-open door.

History affords no evidence that English shops were ever constructed on this free-and-easy principle; but from the allusions and illustrations of the period, it would appear that the majority of London shops in the reign of Edward IV. were crowded, dingy, and in many

instances temporary concerns, closely resembling the old Luckenbooths described in 'The Traditions of Edinburgh': their signs were in general one of the most conspicuous articles in which they dealt, suspended over the door or window, a custom also referred to in the above-mentioned work; yet some of the wealthier classes had painted signs even then, generally referring to some subject of Catholic legend, according to the spirit of the times; and their owners were accustomed to stand in their doors, dressed in velvet hats, long gowns of Kendal cloth, leathern girdles with a pouch at the left side, which was expected to answer the purpose of our modern till; and the shopkeeper's chief employment was to invite in all passengers, and advertise them of the quantity and quality of his goods.

Even so late as the reign of James I., we find that this task devolved on the apprentices, and Sir Walter Scott, in his 'Fortunes of Nigel,' has chronicled their accustomed cry, 'What do you lack? What do you lack, gracious sir, beauteous madam?' which, addressed indiscriminately to the passers on a London street, would have a curious effect in our times; but changes have come over shopkeeping as well as other matters since then. May we not add, that our shopkeeping fashions, in other words, our trading operations, are the basis of our country's prosperity? There was a larger meaning than seems at first obvious in Sidney Smith's proposal to alter 'Britain rules the waves,' to 'Britain rules the shops'; and when Bonaparte stigmatised us as a nation of shopkeepers, he uttered a true though unintentional eulogium on our national skill and success in commerce, which, from the signs of the times, would seem appointed by Providence as one of the most efficient instruments in forwarding the progress and improvement of society.

#### LIBRARY STATISTICS.

An article in the August part of the 'Journal of the Statistical Society of London' gives a view of the principal public libraries in Europe and the United States. The information conveyed by its figures is curious and important; but not so, we think, as even a 'subsidiary element' (according to the compiler's notion) of the educational condition of the states referred to. The people have rarely anything to do, at least in a direct manner, with the national libraries: that of the British Museum, for instance, existing solely for the benefit of the few scores of literary persons in London who resort to it. In like manner, the collections of pictures in the houses of our nobility and gentry give no indication of the state of art among the people; although the degree of liberality with which these galleries are exhibited may influence to some little extent the progress of popular taste.

England is not famous for liberality either in literature or art. We debate eagerly about education, and vie with each other in the unreserve of our confession of its importance: but after all there is more cry than wool. Knowledge is admitted to be a great and universal good; but we guard its avenues with the most jealous restrictions. Even the common highway of the alphabet must be approached only on certain onerous conditions; and the libraries said to belong to the nation are carefully locked up from their owners. This inconsistency prevails less upon the continent, where, generally speaking, the people are permitted to look at the monuments they have reared, and the collections of art they have made, and to read the books they have purchased. All the national libraries of Paris, for instance, with the exception of that of the Arsenal, are lending libraries, and so likewise are those of Munich, Berlin, Copenhagen, Dresden, Wolfenbützel, Milan, Naples, Brussels, the Hague, and Parma. Besides the great public libraries of the capital, there are public libraries of considerable extent in most of the large provincial towns in France, and to these valuable works are occasionally sent at the expense of the nation. In our

own country there is nothing of this sort, if we exclude a few favoured libraries; and what is even the favour in this latter case but the liberty of robbing publishers of their property? Fortunately, the public as individuals does that which the public in its corporate capacity makes a point of neglecting. Throughout the British islands there are hundreds of large libraries supported by subscription, and from these, as well as from libraries of lesser size, there issue more copious streams of knowledge than are poured from perhaps all the great national libraries of Europe put together.

Proceeding to the statement before us, it appears that the number of libraries in Europe, either open to the public or deriving their support from the public, is 383, of which 107 are in France, 41 in the Austrian states and in the kingdom of Lombardy and Venice, 30 in the Prussian states, 28 in Great Britain and Ireland (including Malta), 17 in Spain, 15 in the Papal states, 14 in Belgium, 13 in Switzerland, 12 in the Russian empire, 11 in Bavaria, 9 in Tuscany, 9 in Sardinia, 8 in Sweden, 7 in Naples, 7 in Portugal, 5 in Holland, 5 in Denmark, 5 in Saxony, 4 in Baden, 4 in Hesse, 3 in Wirtemberg, and 3 in Hanover.

The magnitude of these libraries is by no means in proportion to the size of the towns that contain them, or the wealth or importance of the countries to which they belong. In Great Britain and Ireland, for instance, there are 43 volumes to every 100 inhabitants of the towns that contain the books, while in Russia there are 80 to every 100. In Spain, to every 100 there are 106; in France, 125; in the Austrian empire, 159; in the Prussian states, 196; in Parma, 204; in Mecklenburg, 238; in Hesse, 256; in the Papal states, 266; in Nassau, 267; in Tuscany, 268; in Modena, 333; in Switzerland, 340; in Bavaria, 347; in Saxony, 379; in Saxe-Meiningen, 400; in Denmark, 412; in Baden, 480; in Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, 531; in Hesse-Darmstadt, 660; in Wirtemberg, 716; in Saxe-Weimar, 881; in Hanover, 972; in Oldenburg, 1078; and in Brunswick, 2353 volumes. These are curious proportions; and if the magnitude of a public library were really any indication of the educational condition of the country, we should have to conclude that Russia was twice, and Brunswick fifty-five times, better educated than England.

If we restrict our view to the libraries in the capitals, we find our own place still lower in the scale. London has only 20 volumes to every 100 inhabitants, while Brussels has 100, Petersburg 108, Paris 143, Madrid 153, Berlin 162, Rome 306, Copenhagen 465, Munich 750, and Weimar 803. Thus the little city of Weimar is forty times better provided with books than the great Babylon of the modern world.

The number of public libraries in Europe exceeding 10,000 volumes in amount, is 383, and the aggregate number of volumes in all these libraries is 20,012,735. The following are the libraries, with the number of their volumes, in the capital cities:—

1. Paris (1), National Library, - - -	800,000 vols.
2. Munich, Royal Library, - - -	600,000 ...
3. Berlin, Royal Library, - - -	470,000 ...
4. Petersburg, Imperial Library, - -	446,000 ...
5. Copenhagen, Royal Library, - - -	410,000 ...
6. London, British Museum Library, -	350,000 ...
7. Vienna, Imperial Library, - - -	313,000 ...
8. Dresden, Royal Library, - - -	300,000 ...
9. Madrid, National Library, - - -	200,000 ...
10. Wolfenbützel, Ducal Library, - -	200,000 ...
11. Paris (2), Arsenal Library, - - -	180,000 ...
12. Stuttgart, Royal Library, - - -	174,000 ...
13. Milan, Brera Library, - - -	170,000 ...
14. Paris (3), St Genevieve Library, -	150,000 ...
15. Darmstadt, Grand-Ducal Library, -	150,000 ...
16. Florence, Magliabechian, - - -	150,000 ...
17. Naples, Royal Library, - - -	150,000 ...
18. Brussels, Royal Library, - - -	133,500 ...
19. Rome (1), Casanate Library, - - -	120,000 ...
20. Hague, Royal Library, - - -	100,000 ...
21. Paris (4), Mazarine Library, - - -	100,000 ...
22. Rome (2), Vatican Library, - - -	100,000 ...
23. Parma, Ducal Library, - - -	100,000 ...

From the general list of 383 libraries, we may extract the following notice of libraries in the United Kingdom:—The British Museum, as above, 350,000; Sion College, 27,000; King's College, Aberdeen, 20,000; Marischal College, Aberdeen, 12,000; Public Library, and New Public Library, Birmingham, 31,500; libraries in Cambridge, 230,000; libraries in Dublin, 139,000; Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, 160,000; University Library, Edinburgh, 96,000; Library of Writers to the Signet, 50,000; University Library, Glasgow, 50,000; Hunterian Museum Library, 12,000; Cheetham Library, Manchester, 19,000; Bodleian Library, Oxford, 218,000; other libraries in Oxford, 153,000; St Andrew's University Library (now one of the best conducted libraries in Great Britain), 53,000.

In the United States of America there are eighty-one public libraries, having an aggregate of 955,000 volumes, a third of which are in the states of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New York.

No European public library is older than about the middle of the fifteenth century: that of Vienna has now been open to the public since the year 1575. The National Library of Paris was founded in 1595, but was not made public till 1737. A century before the latter date, it contained about 17,000 volumes; and in 1775, this had increased to 150,000. Then came the Revolution, which made it a general receptacle for the confiscated libraries of the convents and private individuals. Some of these, it is true, were summarily disposed of 'for the service of the arsenals'; but even in this case the librarians had usually a right of selection; and the result appears in the fact, that this magnificent collection numbers to-day at least 800,000 volumes. The library of the British Museum was opened to the public in 1757, with 40,000 volumes, after having been founded four years. In 1800, it contained about 65,000 volumes; in 1836, 240,000; and at present it contains, as is stated, 350,000 volumes. The increase of this collection is mainly attributable to donations; one half of its entire contents having been presented or bequeathed. The Copenhagen library, on the contrary, which has increased in the space of a century from 65,000 to 410,000 volumes, has done so by means of purchases equally liberal and judicious. 410,000—374,000; purchase—donation; Denmark—England. What a curious parallel!

The average annual sums allotted to the support of the four chief libraries of Paris is L.23,555: a greatly smaller sum having sufficed, till two years ago, for the library of the British Museum. But since 1846, an increase of L.10,000 for the purchase of books has been made to our parliamentary grant, and the whole annual sum allotted to the service of the library is now L.26,552. We may thus hope to see our national library rise into a consequence more nearly corresponding than hitherto with the greatness of the country; since under the operation of the special grant, there are 30,000 volumes added every year to the collection. At the same time, in the name of the people generally, we cannot but object to the practice of confining grants of this nature to London. What is paid for by all should, in justice, as nearly as possible, be enjoyed by all.

#### THE MASONS OF PARIS.

SHOULD you, when in Paris, desire to see the method of building one of those beautiful edifices with which the French capital is adorned, the best thing we can recommend is, that you should rise early in the morning and proceed to the spot where an edifice is in the course of erection. If early enough, you will see arriving from all quarters a band of workmen clad in a characteristic costume, of which the following is not an inaccurate description:—A loose-fitting blouse of blue or white for some, for others a jacket of coarse cloth; a pocket stuffed with tobacco, and a short pipe, generally of clay, knowingly carved about the bowl, and a cotton pocket-handkerchief with red squares; pantaloons of coarse

cloth or blue cotton; enormously heavy and solid shoes, but no stockings or socks: the costume is completed by a cap or bonnet of cloth stuff, the material of which you suspect rather than recognise under the dabs of diluted plaster and yellow clay produced by stone-sawing, with which it is liberally adorned.

The wearers of this uniform are the artisans employed upon the building, who come to commence the labours of the day. Previous to beginning work, according to an ancient custom, they adjourn to the nearest wine-shop, where a sip of some trifle prepares them, as they think, for encountering their dusty occupation. This ceremony over, they adjourn to the boarded enclosure, where the work is carried on. Apropos of these rough-boarded fences: if encroaching on the public thoroughfares, they are allowed to be put up only on paying at the rate of five francs a metre each month they stand. When, therefore, we feel disposed to revile these ugly timber barriers that interrupt the circulation for months together, we have at least the consolation of remembering that they contribute to the enormous budget of the city of Paris, which enables the municipality from time to time to accelerate the march of improvement. Thus the public are compensated for the inconvenience they endure.

As the clock strikes six, every man hastens to resume his work on the spot where he left off the night before. Some climb up the ladders, and continue the careful laying of the stone blocks; others prepare the mortar or the plaster on the spot. If there be sufficient space to saw and hew the stones at the foot of the building, you will hear the grinding of the saw and the sound of the mallet and chisel on all sides; if not, you will see the barrowmen arrive from the stone-cutters' yard, bringing the stone-blocks already prepared for laying. Each companion-mason has a labourer assigned to him, who is bound to execute his orders; these carry the mortar which they have prepared to the upper storeys, and also stones of moderate dimensions, and perform every possible service, necessary or not, which is required of them, in the hope of being one day, sooner or later, served in their turn.

This labourer or *garçon* mason has been, from time immemorial, the faithful servant of a master or companion, as the mood may prompt. Thus a mason, perched on the upper storey, will call his *garçon*; the *garçon*, quick as thought, clambers up five or six ladders, leaps from scaffold to scaffold, from beam to beam. 'Now, my lad,' says the mason, 'go and look for my pipe!' and the victim descends with the prospect of another journey on equally important business. But when the term of his apprenticeship is expired, and he is a mason himself, he will have his *garçon*, who shall dance up and down in search of his pipe, or for a less sufficient reason, if he choose to make him.

If it were necessary in our day, when monarchs are confined by charters, constitutions, and representative chambers, to personify despotism, we could not choose a better example than the companion-mason, and we would add his *garçon* to the picture, as a living symbol of devotion and self-denial: we make use of the word mason, as the generic term under which all workmen in buildings are ordinarily classed; but the stone-cutter, the stone-setter, the plasterer, &c. have also their *garçon* or labourer.

The following is the value of the various workmen rated in current coin:—Stone-cutter, per day, four francs, four and a-half, and five francs; masons, stone-setters, &c. per day, three francs, three and a-half, and rarely four francs; *garçons*, barrowmen, and other labourers, per day, two francs, to two and a-half.

At taskwork, as labour is always rated at a higher value than time, a good workman can wonderfully augment his salary, earning from seven to eight francs a day. The stone-cutters generally work task-work. To counteract the too indulgent dispositions, the contractor keeps upon the premises a superintendent, with the title of master-companion mason, charged with entire authority over the workmen. It is he who rebukes the idle, fines the late-comers, and registers the absent; he runs from

room to room, sees that every hand is properly employed, and, in case of need, gives his counsel and personal assistance; and his services and advice are so much the more necessary, as every workman, upon meeting with a difficulty that seems to him insoluble, folds his arms peaceably, and waits till Providence or the master-companion comes to his assistance. The importance of this personage and his function it is easy to comprehend, as well as the care and caution the contractor should exercise in his appointment. It is necessary that he should not only be active and intelligent, but, what is more, incorruptible, and courageously proof against the too often irresistible arguments of the wine-seller. All these precious qualities are usually estimated at the price of from 180 to 200 francs a month by the contractor, who retains his services throughout the entire year, notwithstanding any lengthened cessation of labour through the occurrence of frost and wintry weather.

While we have been wandering through the building, and stumbling here and there among the poles and scaffolding, the time has flown—it is nine o'clock: at the first stroke of the bell everything stands still; and all rush away to breakfast. Let us see what kind of a thing is a French workman's breakfast. It is neither the meal porridge of the Scotch nor the tea and toast of the English. While the labourers eat modestly, in the open air, the morsel of pork, or the lump of sour cheese, together with huge wedges from the enormous loaf, which you cannot have failed to remark tucked under their arms upon their arrival at the scene of their operations, the companion-masons resort to the nearest wine-seller, who has prepared them an ample breakfast of their favourite soup, a kind of vegetable pottage, flanked with fried potatoes and other roots, among which the carrot ranks as a conspicuous delicacy—the bread, brought by the workmen themselves, forming the solid portion of the meal. The whole is qualified with a quantity of cheap light wine; and, last of all, a pipe. At ten o'clock all resume their work until two, when the soup and ceremony of the morning are repeated, and the day terminates at six in the evening.

The companion-masons, as well as the labourers, inhabit all quarters of the town, but appear to give a decided preference to the neighbourhood of the *Hôtel de Ville*, and the small dirty and narrow streets and lanes which abut upon the municipal palace, where the cheapest lodgings are to be met with. They sometimes unite to form a chamber, assembling at the house of a letter of lodgings, who follows, besides, the profession of tavern-keeper, or restaurateur. This worthy provides daily, or rather nightly, suppers for the workmen, and even gives credit to those out of employment whose characters are good.

The general rendezvous of the companion-masons is at the *Place de Grève*. From five o'clock in the morning they arrive there in crowds, some in search of work, others on the look-out for comrades; the *roleur* is also always there at that early hour: this functionary, so named from his keeping a list or enrolment of the parties wanting work, is engaged and paid by the body for the purpose of procuring employment for those in want of it; there also come the contractors to engage any number of workmen they may need. The carpenters and joiners frequent the *Place de Grève* as well as the masons; the locksmiths have chosen a domicile near the *Pont-au-Change*, where the wine-shop is an equally necessary appendage, an asylum, indeed, rarely deserted.

We have dwelt at some length upon the occupations of the masons, because it is only at the scene of their labours that their veritable physiognomy is perceptible. We ought now to say something of their pleasures: as we said before, these are of the calm and quiet sort, and on high days, consist chiefly in an extraordinary consumption of cold viands; giblet pies, more or less authentic; and salads furiously seasoned; and especially wine at six or eight sous a pint. The whole is varied by walks, of pure observation, to see the balls and dancing parties, the waltzes and polkas, which in every possible season are in full swing in the suburbs, and at the barriers of



the city. These scenes are not unfrequently attended with quarrels, in which the masons take a more active part; but the disposition to intermeddle and foment strife is unfortunately not peculiar to them, but shared alike by all the laborious classes of the French capital, so proud of its refinement in luxury and civilisation.

It is on fête days only that the mason makes any attempt at personal display; then he puts on his new blue coat with broad lappets, and bright metal buttons shining proudly in the sun; then he changes his heavy mud-coated shoes for boots, equally solid, but brilliant with blacking of the choicest polish: on these days of solemnity he brings forth his broad silver watch, the possession of which he more than intimates by a wide silk ribbon floating gallantly upon his waistcoat, and trinkets of glittering steel. The masons greatly enjoy their fêtes or holidays, the frolics on such occasions being to a certain extent tempered by religious observances. Besides these stated cessations from work, the masons enjoy certain occasional recreations connected with their professional labours. Two of these special festivities may be noticed—the ‘crowning with flowers,’ and the ‘conduct of comrades.’

The last thing done to a house is to polish and ornament it with carvings outside, and these operations are performed by the more skilled craftsmen, who are suspended by ropes on purpose. When this nice work is completed, the building is finished. Now comes the ceremony of crowning. All the artisans employed club together, and buy an enormous branch of a tree bushy with leafage, which they bedeck with ornaments of flowers and ribbons; then one of their number, chosen by lot, ascends to the top of the house they have just built, and erects the resplendent bouquet. As soon as the body of workmen see the joyous signal waving proudly in the air, the favours streaming in the light breeze, and the foliage gently undulating over the summit of the house, the foundations of which they dug but a few months before, they raise their united voices in a shout of applause and gratulation. This ceremony accomplished, they take two other bouquets, more remarkable for their dimensions than the beauty of the flowers with which they are loaded, and repair to the residences of the proprietor and the contractor. These parties, in exchange for the verdant and odorous offering of the workmen, surrender a few five-franc pieces, in the expenditure of which the day is merrily concluded, without any regard for the fatigues of yesterday, or anxiety respecting the uncertainties of the morrow. The crowning with flowers, a modest and charming solemnity, typifying the exaltation of nature over the triumphs of art, is one of those happy traditions which are but too rarely met with among the various bodies of artisans.

The ‘conduct of comrades’ is a ceremony much more in vogue in the provinces than at Paris. It is a mark of esteem conferred upon a workman who is leaving them by his companions, who take this mode of testifying their friendly regard and respect. This benevolent demonstration is principally in usage among the workmen affiliated to some one or other of the societies of companionship. On the day of departure they assemble in great numbers, every one clad in his festal garb, and accompany their departing friend to a certain distance from the town he is leaving. One carries his staff, another his knapsack, and bottles and glasses are distributed among the rest; they proceed on their journey, gossiping, singing, and drinking until the moment of separation; then they drink a general bumper to the health and prosperity of the traveller, and separate. Quarrels are rare at these festivities; for independently of the natural good-humour of the French, they indulge for the most part only in very light wines, which raise the spirits, but do not intoxicate to an injurious degree. What a step towards temperance would be the general use of these wines, instead of beer or gin, among our working-classes in England!

As might be expected in the case of a profession which embraces a greater number of operatives than any other, its members are not supplied by any one particular dis-

trict exclusively. It is not with them as with the water-carriers, who are mostly Auvergnats, or as with the charcoal-burners, who all originate in the calcined gorges of the Cantal. From the north as from the south of the kingdom, from the mountainous region of the Puy de Dôme, from Dauphiny or the level plains of Champagne, from Bourdeaux and from Lille, from the Pyrenees and from the Moselle, from La Creuse and the Upper Rhine, crowds of building operatives swarm regularly to the capital; and in the patois of the various races, as they gossip during the intervals of labour, you may recognise the sharp accent of Provence, the drawing pronunciation of Lorraine, and the unintelligible idiom of Alsace. These various parties are not all easily satisfied: thus during the recent erection of the fortifications of Paris, a whole gang of masons, from Flanders, abandoned the works because the flavour of the Parisian beer was not to their liking; and a party of English labourers on the Rouen railway, sick of soup, soddened salads, and sour wine, recrossed the Channel in the avowed search of British beef and ale.

An immense number of German builders also find occupation in France; and sometimes their importation is so recent, that the least ignorant, or, if you will, the most learned among them, is obliged to act as interpreter for his fellow-countrymen. The workmen from La Creuse are also very numerous, and their peaceable and honest conduct has acquired for them an honourable reputation for morality. Picardy, Normandy, Dauphiny, and the department of Hérault, supply excellent stone-cutters.

That class of workmen who spend their days in the laborious occupation of building the rough walls, are all exclusively natives of the neighbourhood of Limoges. They are bound inseparably together by a strong spirit of clanship, and practise a rigorous economy, which their enemies revile as avarice. During the times of the recess, which commences about the 20th of November, and lasts till the middle of March, they manage to regain, either singly or in small bodies, the country which gave them birth; there they carry the savings of the year, until at length, having accumulated enough to buy a small plot of ground, they return to their cherished country, to quit it no more, content with the humblest independence, because it is the welcome reward of their own industry.

In a country like France, where the police keep incessant watch, with such touching solicitude, over all the citizens, we may well suppose that they have neglected nothing that could tend to maintain order and submission among the vast body of building operatives, or even to enable them at any time to verify the conduct of each individual. Accordingly, we find that the administration has multiplied the regulations and ordinances affecting them from time to time, until at length it controls the operations of the companionships, fixes their itineraries, appoints their salaries, and allots the hours of labour throughout the year; lastly, it compels each man to keep a book, which is in some sort the account-current of his conduct and position as a workman; this book is an abridged memoir of the owner's existence, as well as his cash-book and ledger; in it he must inscribe the date of his engagements, the names of his employers, the sums which he receives, and, upon the first page, his own name, surname, profession, &c. according to the eternal formula. Though this *livret* is, for bad characters, a register of faults, and an act of perpetual accusation, for the honest, sober, peaceable, and industrious labourer it becomes a veritable book of gold, in which are inscribed his titles of nobility; honourable and just titles, inasmuch as they spring from the practice of intelligence, industry, and integrity.

We could mention more than one illustrious individual who, by active perseverance, have ascended from the inferior ranks to a high position, and who look not without pride upon the humble book which was the confidant of their former deprivation and fatigue; and we may well pardon that pride which glances with complacency from the calculation of a princely revenue to the soiled and tattered pages of the operative's work-book.

## TEMPERANCE STATISTICS.

There are at present in England, Ireland, and Scotland, eight hundred and fifty temperance societies, with one million six hundred and forty thousand members. In the Canadas, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, there are nine hundred and fifty temperance societies, with three hundred and seventy thousand members. In South America there are seventeen thousand persons who have signed the temperance pledge. In Germany there are fifteen hundred temperance societies, with one million three hundred thousand members. In Sweden and Norway there are five hundred and ten temperance societies, with one hundred and twenty thousand members. In the Sandwich Islands there are five thousand persons who have signed the pledge of total abstinence. At the Cape of Good Hope there are nine hundred pledged members. It is ascertained that upwards of seven thousand persons annually perish in Great Britain through accidents while drunk; and the loss to the working-classes alone, through drinking, appears to be annually five hundred and fifty millions of dollars. The enormous sum of four hundred and ninety millions of dollars was expended in Great Britain last year for intoxicating beverages, and five hundred and twenty millions of gallons of malt liquors were brewed last year in Great Britain. In the United States there are three thousand seven hundred and ten temperance societies, with two million six hundred and fifteen thousand members, which includes the Sons of Temperance. In Russia all temperance societies are strictly forbidden by the emperor. In Prussia, Austria, and Italy, there are no temperance societies. In France the temperance cause, although yet in its infancy, is greatly on the increase. The first temperance society in the world, so far as discovery is known, was formed in Germany on Christmas day in the year 1690.—*C. K. Delavan of New York.*

## IMPORTANCE OF FLANNEL NEXT THE SKIN.

It would be easy to adduce strong evidence in behalf of the value and importance of wearing flannel next the skin. 'Sir John Pringle,' says Dr Hodgkin, 'who accompanied our army into the north at the time of the Rebellion, relates that the health of the soldiers was greatly promoted by their wearing flannel waistcoats, with which they had been supplied on their march by some Society of Friends;' and Sir George Ballingall, in his lectures on military surgery, adduces the testimony of Sir James Macgregor to the statement that, in the Peninsula, the best-clothed regiments were generally the most healthy; adding that, when in India, he witnessed a remarkable proof of the usefulness of flannel in checking the progress of the most aggravated form of dysentery, in the second battalion of the Royals. Captain Murray told Dr Combe that 'he was so strongly impressed, from former experience, with a sense of the efficacy of the protection afforded by the constant use of flannel, next the skin, that, when, on his arrival in England, in December 1823, after two years' service amid the icebergs on the coast of Labrador, the ship was ordered to sail immediately for the West Indies, he ordered the purser to draw two extra flannel shirts and pairs of drawers for each man, and instituted a regular daily inspection to see that they were worn. These precautions were followed by the happiest results. He proceeded to his station with a crew of 150 men; visited almost every island in the West Indies, and many of the ports of the Gulf of Mexico; and notwithstanding the sudden transition from extreme climates, returned to England without the loss of a single man, or having any sick on board on his arrival. It would be going too far to ascribe this excellent state of health solely to the use of flannel; but there can be little doubt that the latter was an important element in Captain Murray's success.'—*Robertson on Diet and Regimen.*

## TRUE BLUE.

Everybody has heard and made use of the phrase 'true blue;' but everybody does not know that its first assumption was by the Covenanters, in opposition to the scarlet badge of Charles I, and hence it was taken by the troops of Lesley and Montrose in 1639. The adoption of the colour was one of those religious pederstries in which the Covenanters affected a pharisaical observance of the scriptural letter, and the usages of the Hebrews; and thus, as they named their children Habakkuk and Zerubabel, and their chapels Zion and Ebenezer, they decorated their persons with blue ribbons, because the following sumptuary

precept was given in the law of Moses:—'Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue.'—Num. xv, 38.

## GIVE PLACE, YE LADIES.

[A ballad copied in Collier's Extracts from the Registers of the Stationers' Company: Date, 1666-7.]

GIVE place, you ladies all,  
Unto my mistress faire,  
For none of you, or great or small,  
Can with my love compare.

If you would knowe her well,  
You shall her nowe behold,  
If any tonge at all may tell  
Her beautie[s] manyfold.

She is not high ne lowe,  
But just the perfect height,  
Below my head, above my hart,  
And then a wand more straight.

She is not full ne spare,  
But just as she sholde bee,  
An armfull for a god, I sweare;  
And more—she loveth mee.

Her shape hath noe defect,  
Or none that I can finde,  
Such as in deede you might expect  
From so well formde a minde.

Her skin not blacke, ne white,  
But of a lovelie hew,  
As if created for delight;  
Yet she is mortall too.

Her haire is not to[o] darke,  
No, nor I weene to[o] light;  
It is what it sholde be; and marke—  
It pleaseth me outright.

Her eies nor greene, nor gray,  
Nor like the heavens above;  
And more of them what needes I say,  
But that they looke and love?

Her foote not short ne longe,  
And what may more surprise,  
Though some, perchance, may thinke me wrong,  
'Tis just the fitting size.

Her hande, yea, then, her hande,  
With fingers large or fine,  
It is enough, you understand,  
I like it—and 'tis mine.

In briefe, I am content  
To take her as she is,  
And holde that she by Heaven was sent  
To make compleate my blisse.

Then ladies, all give place  
Unto my mistress faire,  
For nowe you knowe so well her grace,  
You needes must all dispaire.

## WONDERS OF CHEMISTRY.

Aquafortis and the air we breathe are made of the same materials. Linen and sugar, and spirits of wine, are so much alike in their chemical composition, that an old shirt can be converted into its own weight in sugar, and the sugar into spirits of wine. Wine is made of two substances, one of which is the cause of almost all combination of burning, and the other will burn with more rapidity than anything in nature. The famous Peruvian bark, so much used to strengthen stomachs, and the poisonous principle of opium, are found of the same materials.—*Scientific American.*

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